



NEWS RELEASE

Today's Date: Wednesday January 2, 2008 -- 08-001
District: District 2 - Redding
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

REDDING – The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) District 2 advises motorists to prepare for the upcoming storms. The National Weather Service predicts high winds, heavy rains and snow in the higher elevations throughout the weekend. It's best to stay off the roads during winter storms, but if you must go out use caution, common sense and be prepared.

For more information on winter driving or chain controls check out the web at www.caltrans2.info or if traveling through Oregon, www.tripcheck.com

BE PREPARED

Before heading to snow country, make sure your **brakes, windshield wipers, defroster, heater and exhaust system** are in top condition.

Check your antifreeze and be ready for colder temperatures. You may want to add special solvent to your windshield washer reservoir to prevent icing.

Check your tires. Make sure they are properly inflated and the tread is in good condition.

Always **carry tire chains/traction devices**. Make sure they are the proper size for your tires and are in working order. You might also want to take along a **flashlight** and **chain repair links**. Chains must be installed on the drive wheels. Make sure you know if your vehicle is front or rear wheel drive.

Other suggested items to carry in your car are an **ice scraper or commercial deicer, a broom** for brushing snow off your car, **a shovel** to free your car if it's "snowed in," **sand or burlap** for traction if your wheels should become mired in snow and a **towel** to clean your hands.

It is also a good idea to take along water, food, warm blankets and extra clothing. A lengthy delay will make you glad you have these supplies.

Put an extra car key in your pocket. A number of motorists have locked themselves out of their cars when putting on chains.

CHAIN CONTROL ENFORCEMENT & CHECKPOINTS

You must stop and put on chains when highway signs indicate chains are required. You can be cited by the California Highway Patrol and fined if you don't. Chain Control Checkpoints, staffed by Caltrans and CHP, are used on highways and freeways that historically have major problems with driver compliance.

You will be required to stop at staffed checkpoints. You will be directed to turn around if you do not have adequate tires or chains. The majority of times when chains are required, you will not be required to pass through a checkpoint. Drivers must follow "Chains Required" signs whether required to go through a checkpoint or not.

When you must put on chains, wait until you can pull completely off the roadway to the right. Do not stop in a traffic lane where you will endanger yourself and block traffic.

Chain Installers: If you use the services of a chain installer, be sure to get a receipt and jot the installer's badge number on it. Remember, chain installers are independent business people, not Caltrans employees. Having the badge number may help with any misunderstandings later. Chain installers are NOT allowed to sell or rent chains.

When removing chains, drive beyond the signs reading "End Chain Control" to a pull-off area where you can safely remove them.

WINTER DRIVING TIPS

Buckle your seatbelt. Each passenger is required to wear a seatbelt and small children must be in approved car seats.

Allow enough time. Trips to the mountains can take longer during winter than other times of year, especially if you encounter storm conditions or icy roads. Get an early start and allow plenty of time to reach your destination.

Keep your gas tank full. It may be necessary to change routes or turn back during a bad storm or you may be caught in a traffic delay.

Keep windshield and windows clear. You may want to stop at a safe turnout to use a snow brush or scraper. Use the car defroster and a clean cloth to keep the windows free of fog.

Slow down. A highway speed of 55 or 65 miles an hour may be safe in dry weather, but an invitation for trouble on snow or ice. Snow and ice make stopping distances much longer, so leave more distance between your vehicle and the vehicle ahead. Bridge decks and shady spots can be icy when other areas are not. Remember to avoid sudden stops and quick direction changes.

Be more observant. Visibility is often limited in winter by weather conditions. Slow down and watch for other vehicles and for snow removal equipment. Even though snow removal vehicles have flashing lights, visibility may be so restricted during a storm that it is difficult to see the slow moving equipment.

When stalled, stay with your vehicle and try to conserve fuel while maintaining warmth. Be alert to any possible exhaust or carbon monoxide problems.

ABOUT DELAYS AND CLOSURES

Weather and road conditions change rapidly and may cause a change in chain control points or a closure of the highway. The highway may be open when you leave home, but may close or have chain controls imposed as you are traveling to your destination.

Spinouts and accidents happen frequently during storms, which may block the roadway for several hours. Heavily traveled routes are particularly vulnerable to such closures.

Low visibility caused by high winds and blowing snow is another cause for closing a highway.

Caltrans is trying to reduce the number and length of times I-5 is closed due to spinouts and accidents. During major storms when traffic flow is heavy, Caltrans will implement one or all of the following checkpoint controls:

1. **Truck Screening:** This is typically done for northbound I-5 approximately 10 miles north of Redding (Fawndale Interchange). All semi-trucks will be checked to make sure they have a full set of tire chains before being allowed to travel north into areas where chains will be required.



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2. Metering: Metering will be implemented when necessary to control the number of vehicles that feed into the snow area. This congestion control procedure gives Caltrans a better chance of keeping the freeway open.

3. Chains Required on Black Pavement: At times you will be required to use chains before encountering snow on the pavement. This is necessary due to the limited number of fully equipped check points, changing snow levels, and the need to prevent problems before they happen.

SNOW TIRES & CHAINS DEFINITIONS

SNOW TIRES

The California Vehicle Code, Section 558 defines a snow-tread tire as follows:

"A 'snow-tread tire' is a tire which has a relatively deep and aggressive tread pattern compared with conventional passenger tread pattern". Snow-tread tires can be identified by examining the sidewall of the tire where the letters MS, M/S, M+S or the words MUD AND SNOW have been stamped into the sidewalls.

TIRE TRACTION DEVICES

The California Vehicle Code, Section 605 defines tire traction devices as follows:

"Tire Traction Devices are devices or mechanisms having a composition and design capable of improving vehicle traction, braking and cornering ability upon snow or ice-covered surfaces. Tire traction devices shall be constructed and assembled to provide sufficient structural integrity and to prevent accidental detachment from vehicles. Tire traction devices shall at the time of manufacture or final assembly, bear a permanent impression indicating the name, initials or trademark of the assembling company or primary manufacturer, and the country in which the devices were manufactured or assembled in final form."

